**Introduction to Afghan Asylum Cases**

Thank you for volunteering to represent an Afghan asylum seeker! This SharePoint site will contain all the information you will need to represent your client(s) effectively and efficiently in their asylum case.

If you have questions about the resources shared here by The Advocates or resources you find on your own, please contact Zack Albun, Staff Attorney, ([zalbun@advrights.org](mailto:zalbun@advrights.org)) and or Katherine Veldhuizen, Program Coordinator, ([kveldhuizen@advrights.org](mailto:kveldhuizen@advrights.org)).

**Helpful Non-Legal Trainings**

Below are some trainings that we highly recommend reviewing. These trainings provide some additional context about the political landscape in the country, cultural sensitivity, and tools for working with clients who have experienced trauma.

* [**Understanding the Afghan Refugee Crisis**](https://info.supporthumanrightsfirst.org/event/understanding-the-afghan-refugee-crisis/e379029)
* [**Cultural Humility and How it Applies to Lawyers Working with Afghan Clients**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_mvi7Ztats)
* [**Afghan Asylum Screening and the Trauma-Informed Approach**](https://www.dropbox.com/s/brfe5o8uw7crrue/Tahirih%20Pro%20Bono_%20Afghan%20Asylum%20Screening%20and%20the%20Trauma-Informed%20Approach%20%281%29.mp4?dl=0)

**Interpretation and Translation**

Most Afghan evacuees do not speak English proficiently and will require either a Pashto or Dari interpreter. The Advocates for Human Rights have limited access to volunteer interpreters at this time; therefore, firms will likely need to identify their own interpretation and translation services.

Google or Bing Translate can be for basic communications such as setting up a time to speak with the client or asking simple questions.

**Important Notes:**

* Google Translate and Bing Translate should not be utilized as the sole method of interpretation or translation.
* Dari is listed as "Persian" on both Google and Bing Translate. Dari and Persian, or Farsi, have the same written script but have some differences in spoken pronunciation.
* When working with interpreters make sure to **speak slowly and take pauses** to allow the interpreter to translate everything accurately. Encourage your client to do the same.
* Try to avoid using legal jargon whenever possible!

**Communication with Clients**

The Advocates utilizes WhatsApp to communicate with clients and find that most clients are most familiar with this application. If you or your firm can, we recommend installing **WhatsApp Business** on your phone. You can use your existing work number as the phone number or, if you are working on a team, you can also create a new, temporary, phone number using Google Voice.

Once you install **WhatsApp Business** on your phone, you will be able to use the Desktop version as well, making it easier to communicate with your client(s) across devices. You can have up to 5 devices connected to a WhatsApp number, allowing multiple people to access the same account.

**Important Note:** Many clients have limited experience with smart phones or technology and may have difficulty navigating Zoom, email, or other online platforms.

**Cultural Competency**

* **Dress Code:** If you plan to meet your clients in person, please refrain from wearing short or revealing clothing.
* **Basic Greetings:** Learning basic greetings demonstrates to your client(s) that you are willing and interested in their language and culture. Here are a few basic greetings in both Pashto and Dari:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Phrase in English** | **PASHTO** | **DARI** |
| **“Hi, my name is…”** | “Salaam/Salaamona, zama nom (**insert name**) da.” | “Salaam, naam-e ma (**insert name**) ast.” |
| **“How are you?”** | “Taso Sanga yast?” | “Shoma chetor asten?” |
| **“How is your family?”** | “Staso koranai sanga da?” | “Faa-meel-e shoma chetor ast?” |
| **“What do you need?”** | “Taso sa pakar de?” | “Shoma chee kaar daaren?” |
| **“Do you speak English?”** | “Taso Englee-see zdaaa da?” | “Shoma Englee-see yaad daaren?” |
| **“Thank you”** | “Manana.” | “Ta shakor.” |
| **“You’re welcome”** | “Se schai.” **OR** “Heela kawoom.” | “Qabele tashakor nest.” |

**What Support Will The Advocates Provide?**

**Weekly Office Hours:**

The Advocates will be hosting weekly office hours open to all pro bono attorney and paralegal volunteers.

Attendees are encouraged to post their case-related questions to a rolling agenda document prior to the weekly office hours so our staff attorney can prepare to address your question during the meeting. Additionally, each week will include a general training topic based on what stage most clients' cases are in.

The Afghan Asylum Weekly Office Hours occur **every Wednesday from 2:30PM to 3:30PM** (Central) on Zoom.

Recorded trainings and more information on Office Hours can be found in the "02. Weekly Office Hours" folder on Dropbox.

**Malpractice Insurance**

Volunteer attorneys can be covered under The Advocates malpractice insurance if you:

* Register as a volunteer on our website
* Provide us with a copy of your signed retainer agreement